

## A Survivor's Story - Part I

*NOTE: This story was written by a physician. It has been left in its original form, with spelling and grammar mistakes. This is in part to demonstrate how the trauma of abuse affects her when she recalls what happened.*

When I met my husband at my sister's wedding, I was attracted right away but the biggest thing was he had a strong faith and went to my church. We married a year and a half later. When we married he felt as many traditional Lutheran men that he was the spiritual head of the family, but he was very happy to be the stay at home Dad and I would work in a job that I believe I was called to be in- medicine.

After we were married, the kids came but there were more disturbing incidences of my husband's anger, depression and as the kids grew- he started to take this out on me and the kids. This was manifested in long lectures for me- (one to two hours) on what I did not do correctly. Also as the kids grew they were required to listen to long angry lectures on perceived misbehaviors and messiness. While we did not as a couple eschew spankings, these occasionally became severe spankings with large bruises left (I was not in the house when these happened). My husband threatened several times that he was going to leave me and I would not make it without his help. I started to believe this. Over time, I started keeping a daily list of over 50 things I reviewed several times a day so I would not make him mad. These were things like don't leave any water residue when you wipe the counters, only go in circles when you wipe the counters, don't use toilet paper for tissue, etc. I very insidiously became afraid and cowed, anxious to not make my husband unhappy or he would leave us and I couldn't make it on my own. Some times were good but when he was depressed, he became very controlling, demanding, and angry. I could not spend money on lunches and my "blow money" was severely limited despite the fact that we were very gifted with my generous salary. When my daughter was born and she was 18 months he spanked her so hard she had a severely bruised tush for a week. I made it clear that I would leave if anything like that ever happened again. Fortunately the physical abuses improved, but not the roller coaster of controlling angry behavior.

I forced my husband to go to marriage counseling with our church several times. The biblical advice was clear. I would obey my husband but in turn he would love me and do the best for me. This would have worked except my husband's concept of doing the best for me was to teach me to be obedient (I can't tell you how many times I heard this word) and to do that he had to discipline me. I became more withdrawn. I myself felt trapped and without recourse. The resounding message from church was that I should be obedient and pray and God would answer my prayers.

**Identify: List as many abuses as you can from the story above.**

Physical	
Emotional/Mental	
Financial	
Spiritual	